



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Transit
Administration**

400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

March 15, 2006

Dear Colleague:

Over the past three years, FTA has attempted to improve the quality of travel forecasts developed in support of proposed New Starts projects. We have stepped up our own scrutiny of forecasts, asked that project sponsors to relate project benefits to the forecasts, distributed software to support quality control and reporting, and launched several research efforts.

Currently, FTA is responding to various requirements of SAFETEA-LU, the new authorizing legislation for the federal transit and highway programs, with a new regulation for the New Starts program, several reports to Congress, and other required analyses. Many of these items touch on, and several focus on, travel forecasting for New Starts projects.

Given all of these activities and the nearly three years that have gone by since we last met on this subject in July 2003 in San Francisco and Washington DC, it seems to us that the time is ripe for another get-together on travel forecasting. Attached is a draft agenda for a 2-day workshop that we have scheduled for June 15-16, 2006, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The agenda comprises three subjects:

- Ongoing efforts to capture the complete range of the benefits of major transit investments;
- New quality control procedures for New Starts travel forecasts; and
- Initial thoughts on guidance that FTA will issue on New Starts travel forecasting.

The workshop will be an opportunity for discussion rather than simply presentations by FTA staff. To make this possible, FTA will distribute reading materials in advance of the workshop so that participants can come to the workshop prepared to discuss the issues, comment on FTA efforts, and suggest new ideas and directions.

Please note that the workshop is intended for technical staff who specialize in the development of travel models and the preparation of travel forecasts. The discussions will be focused on technical issues, emerging methods, and detailed procedures for quality control. Project managers and planning staff from sponsoring agencies, metropolitan planning agencies, and consultants most probably should attend other New Starts outreach sessions – including the one-day workshops on the New Starts program and the three-day course on alternatives analysis.

We look forward to seeing you in Minneapolis.

Ron Fisher
Director, Office of Project Planning

Travel Forecasting for New Starts Proposals
A Workshop Sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration
June 15-16, 2006

Millennium Hotel
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Preliminary Agenda

Day 1	#	Session	Minutes	Schedule
	1 -	Introductions and Overview	45	8:30 AM to 9:15 AM
	2 -	Project benefits (a): additional transit attributes	45	9:15 AM to 10:00 AM
		Break	15	10:00 AM to 10:15 AM
	3 -	Project benefits (b): congestion relief	30	10:15 AM to 10:45 AM
	4 -	Project benefits (c): variable trip tables	30	10:45 AM to 11:15 AM
	5 -	Project benefits (d): variable land use	30	11:15 AM to 11:45 AM
	6 -	Project benefits (e): economic development	30	11:45 AM to 12:15 PM
		Lunch	45	12:15 PM to 1:00 PM
	7 -	Quality control (a): FTA analysis of predicted and actual ridership	15	1:00 PM to 1:15 PM
	8 -	Quality control (b): data library and insights	30	1:15 PM to 1:45 PM
	9 -	Quality control (c): CTPP-based aggregate model	45	1:45 PM to 2:30 PM
		Break	15	2:30 PM to 2:45 PM
	10 -	Quality control (d): semi-independent forecasts	45	2:45 PM to 3:30 PM
	11 -	Quality control (e): additional QC test measures	45	3:30 PM to 4:15 PM
	12 -	Quality control (f): Summit update	45	4:15 PM to 5:00 PM
Day 2	#	Session	Minutes	Schedule
	13 -	Quality control (g): early quality-of-service analysis	45	8:30 AM to 9:15 AM
	14 -	Quality control (h): dealing with uncertainties in forecasts	45	9:15 AM to 10:00 AM
		Break	15	10:00 AM to 10:15 AM
	15 -	Quality control (i): tracking the accuracy of forecasts	30	10:15 AM to 10:45 AM
	16 -	Draft guidance (a): properties of travel forecasting methods	45	10:45 AM to 11:30 AM
	17 -	Draft guidance (b): calibration and validation	45	11:30 AM to 12:15 PM
		Lunch	45	12:15 PM to 1:00 PM
	18 -	Draft guidance (c): methods for on-board surveys	30	1:00 PM to 1:30 PM
	19 -	Draft guidance (d): preservation of travel forecasts	30	1:30 PM to 2:00 PM
	20 -	Other comments, ideas, and suggestions	30	2:00 PM to 2:30 PM
	21 -	Summary of conclusions and next steps	30	2:30 PM to 3:00 PM